

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A picture coding method for coding a moving picture having a plurality of pictures, on a picture-by-picture basis, using a set of picture numbers repeatedly assigned in coding order to respective pictures included in the moving picture such that more than one of the pictures included in the moving picture has the same picture number, the picture coding method comprising:

a first adding step of adding, using a first adding unit, a first memory management command to a first picture having a predetermined picture number, the first memory management command being information for managing the first picture; and

a determining step of determining, using a determining unit, whether or not the first picture, from among a plurality of pictures each having the predetermined picture number, is located immediately previous to a second picture in coding order, the second picture being different from the first picture;

a second adding step of adding, using a second adding unit, a second memory management command to a point of the second ~~a second~~ picture, the second memory management command being the same as the first memory management command, ~~the second picture being different from the first picture, and the first picture being located earlier than the second picture in coding order, when it is determined in the determining step that the first picture is located immediately previous to the second picture in coding order; and~~

a prohibiting step of prohibiting, using a prohibiting unit, the addition of the second memory management command when it is determined in the determining step that the first

picture is not located immediately previous to the second picture in coding order.

~~wherein, in the second adding step, the second memory management command is added to the point of the second picture after a determination is made that the first picture, from among a plurality of pictures each having the predetermined picture number, is located immediately previous to the second picture in coding order.~~

14. (Currently Amended) A picture coding apparatus that codes a moving picture having a plurality of pictures, on a picture-by-picture basis, using a set of picture numbers repeatedly assigned in coding order to respective pictures included in the moving picture such that more than one of the pictures included in the moving picture has the same picture number, the picture coding apparatus comprising:

a first adding unit operable to add a first memory management command to a first picture having a predetermined picture number, the first memory management command being information for managing the first picture; ~~and~~

a determining unit operable to determine whether or not the first picture, from among a plurality of pictures each having the predetermined picture number, is located immediately previous to a second picture in coding order, the second picture being different from the first picture;

a second adding unit operable to add a second memory management command to a point of ~~a second~~~~the second~~ picture, the second memory management command being the same as the first memory management command, ~~the second picture being different from the first picture, and the first picture being located earlier than the second picture in coding order, when it is~~

determined by the determining unit that the first picture is located immediately previous to the second picture in coding order; and

a prohibiting unit operable to prohibit the addition of the second memory management command when it is determined by the determining unit that the first picture is not located immediately previous to the second picture in coding order.

~~wherein the second adding unit adds the second memory management command to the point of the second picture after a determination is made that the first picture, from among a plurality of pictures each having the predetermined picture number, is located immediately previous to the second picture in coding order.~~

15. (Currently Amended) A picture coding method for generating a coded picture stream of a moving picture by coding a moving picture having a plurality of pictures, on a picture-by-picture basis, using a set of picture numbers repeatedly assigned in coding order to respective pictures included in the moving picture such that more than one of the pictures included in the moving picture has the same picture number, the picture coding method comprising:

 a first adding step of adding, using a first adding unit, a first memory management command to a first picture having a predetermined picture number, the first memory management command being information for managing the first picture; and

a determining step of determining, using a determining unit, whether or not the first picture, from among a plurality of pictures each having the predetermined picture number, is located immediately previous to a second memory management command in coding order;

a second adding step of adding, using a second adding unit, the second a second memory management command to the coded picture stream of the moving picture, the second memory management command being the same as the first memory management command, and the first picture being located earlier than the second memory management command in coding order, when it is determined in the determining step that the first picture is located immediately previous to the second memory management command in coding order; and

a prohibiting step of prohibiting, using a prohibiting unit, the addition of the second memory management command when it is determined in the determining step that the first picture is not located immediately previous to the second memory management command in coding order.

wherein, in the second adding step, the second memory management command is added to the coded picture stream of the moving picture after a determination is made that the first picture, from among a plurality of pictures each having the predetermined picture number, is located immediately previous to the second memory management command in coding order.